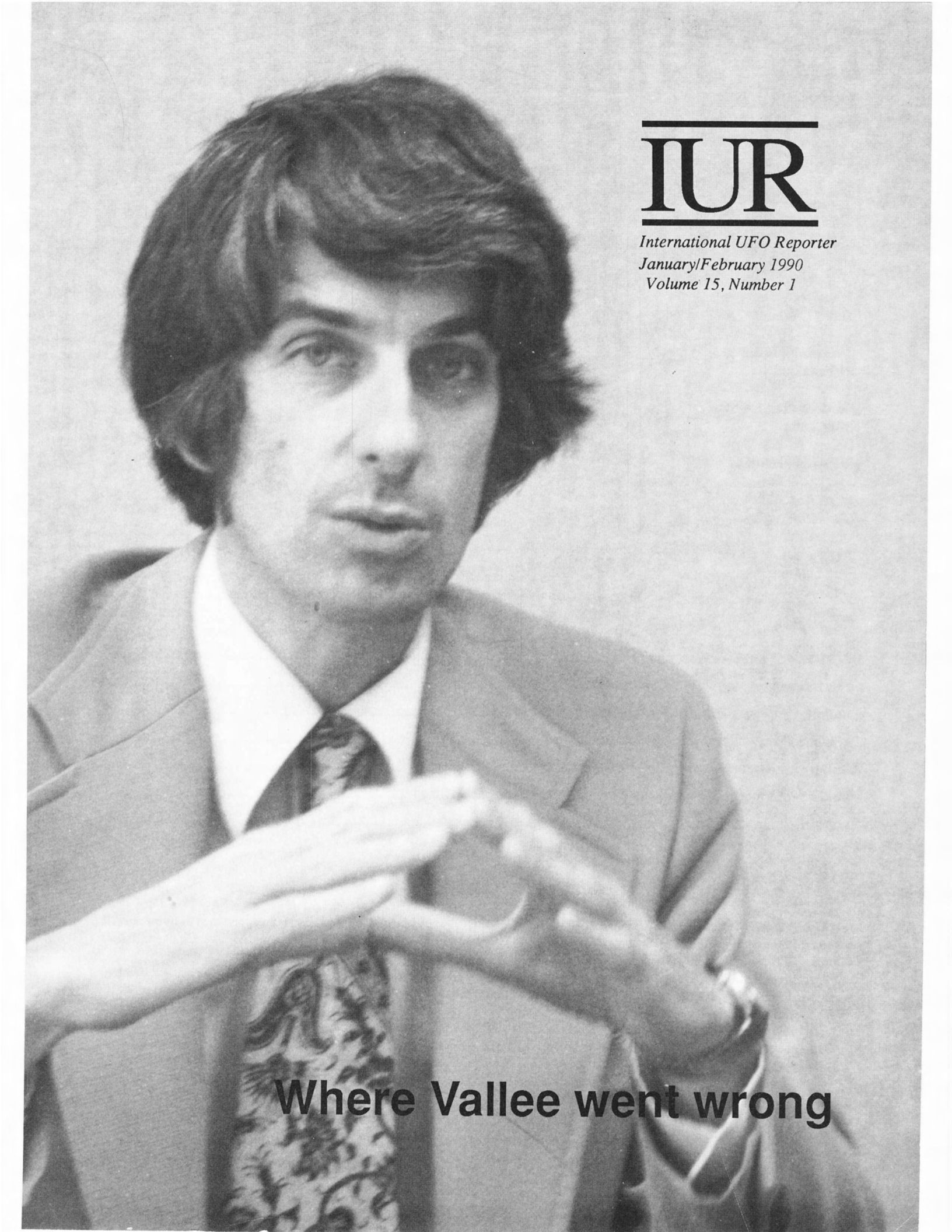




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Where Vallee went wrong

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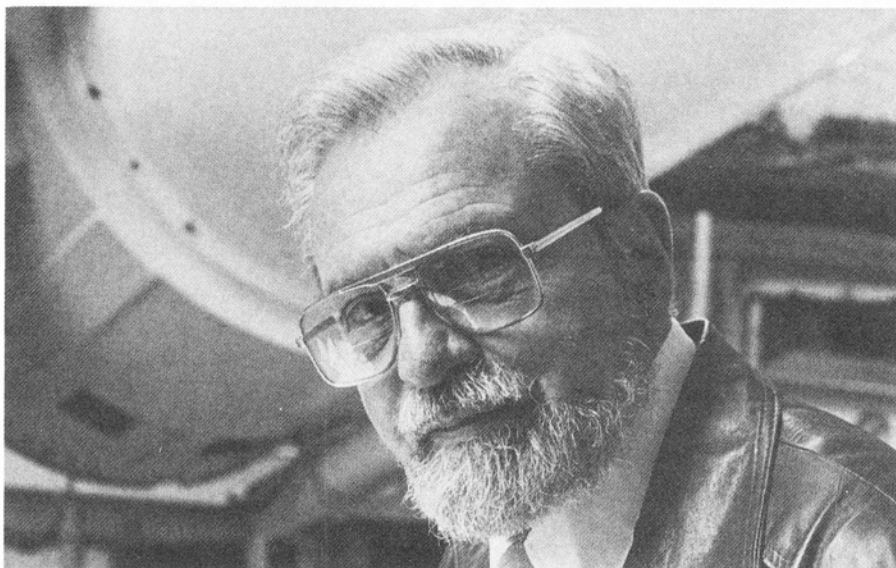
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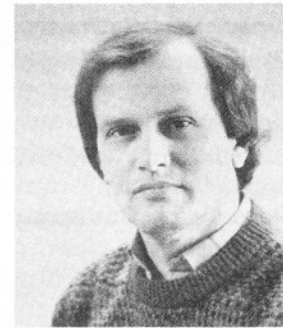
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Let the debate begin

A good friend from England writes that neoskepticism will reign supreme in the British ufology of 1990. Three major books will take debunkers' perspectives on aspects of the UFO phenomenon. A prominent figure in that nation's UFO community writes confidently that the extraterrestrial hypothesis has not a "scrap of evidence" behind it. We can assume, I trust, that this is an exaggeration for effect rather than a literal expression of an opinion, but nonetheless it is indicative of how differently the UFO phenomenon is being seen elsewhere in the world, and even by a small group of thinkers who so far are on the fringes of American ufology but whose influence may grow in the years ahead (depending, we suppose, on what progress abduction proponents and cover-up investigators make in finding conclusive evidence to support their particular nuts-and-bolts interpretations).

In the March/April 1989 issue of *IUR* two Italian friends of ours, Edoardo Russo and Gian Paolo Grassino, remarked on how the ufologies of Europe and America are diverging. Their sympathies are with Europe's "psychosocial hypothesis" of which American ufologists are only now becoming widely aware. (The psychosocial hypothesis is essentially a skeptical interpretation of UFO events, but it differs from the traditional version, still adhered to by legions of CSICOP faithful, in positing unusual mental states rather than hoaxes as the source of dramatic encounters.) In response I defended the American view, which in my opinion is better grounded in the available evidence. (A much-expanded critical analysis of the psychosocial hypothesis will appear in a book of mine to be published in late spring.) The larger purpose in publishing the two articles was to spark further discussion and debate about the great questions ufology faces and about which our colleagues across the water have obviously been devoting concentrated and creative thought. To my disappointment the only responses to the two articles came, with maybe three exceptions, from those who had been directly mentioned or criticized. These individuals naturally had every right to defend their views, but I had the feeling that many other readers viewed the exchange with incomprehension or considered it irrelevant.

To all current appearances each side is communicating only with its own troops. That is no way to get to the truth, but it is a fairly certain path to self-delusion. The



Jerome Clark

UFO community is small to start with, but when it breaks into its own sects, each swearing allegiance to a favorite dogma, the result is the epidemic of intellectual incest now abroad in UFO-land. No doubt it is easier (and a whole lot less aggravating) to read books whose authors' views match one's own. And of course it is easier to converse or correspond with those whose wisdom and good sense are evinced by their agreement with you. Nothing wrong with that — *if* you also familiarize yourself with those ideas and individuals who, using reasonable arguments and evidence, have come to entirely different conclusions. In 1990 ufology has three serious schools of thought (extraterrestrial, psychosocial/neoskeptical, and geophysical), all of which have, in varying degrees, something going for them. Their strengths and weaknesses should be the subject of vigorous debate by informed, intelligent advocates and critics.

So far little of this is happening, to everybody's detriment. Another friend, this one an American, laments, "It appears that nobody reads anybody else in ufology anymore." Much of what gets written in the UFO press is simply ill-informed, as if the satisfaction to be gleaned from making grand pronouncements did not carry with it the responsibility to know what one is talking about. This is particularly unfortunate at a time in UFO history when the best writing has never been more interesting and the potential for extraordinary breakthroughs more imminent. Anyone who says nothing is going on in ufology must have fallen asleep about 10 years ago.

It is time that we who hold differing views begin to talk with, not past, each other. I don't mean that we all have to start agreeing, or embracing the banal — and false — notion that one idea is as good as another. I do mean that at the very least each of us should know what the other guy's best arguments are.

A good place for my countrymen to start is by reading Hilary Evans' important and challenging books and by subscribing to *Magonia*; a year's subscription (four issues) is available for \$10 (in cash) from John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake

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The thickets of Magonia

by Jerome Clark

■ ■ Jerome Clark, *IUR* editor and vice president of CUFOS, is coauthor, with J. Gordon Melton and Aidan A. Kelly, of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of the New Age*, a survey of occult religious movements, including flying-saucer contactee groups. He is at work on a multi-volume encyclopedic history of the UFO controversy.

It has been a long time since a new book by Jacques Vallee was an occasion of note. Yet I well recall the delight I experienced as I devoured his first, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*, shortly after its publication in 1965. Everyone who read it, I am sure, sensed that an important new figure had appeared on the scene, bringing with him a mature and thoughtful perspective on the perplexing issues with which ufology had grappled since its outset. The next year brought the admirable follow-up *Challenge to Science: The UFO Enigma*, which Vallee wrote with his wife Janine. If anything, *Challenge* was an even better book than its predecessor. Unfortunately, disaster — not too strong a word — followed.

Probably no one, or at least no one who had any claim to be taken for what passes in ufology as an intellectual, would lead ufology down more dead ends than Vallee would. He acknowledges as much, albeit belatedly, unapologetically and briefly, in his new book, about which I shall have much to say: "In Europe, to my amazement, my books [caused] ... [s]ome researchers [to embrace] the idea that ufology was modern folklore and carried it to an extreme: everything was folklore and there was no physical reality behind the sightings at all. This gave rise to a series of psychological exercises tending to explain UFOs by various psychic mechanisms where the actual material facts of the case were now completely ignored." Such exercises, Vallee does not add but could have, have virtually paralyzed a considerable portion of European ufology ever since. They also infected much of American ufology and much ufology in Australia to this day.

This sad state of affairs began with *Passport to Magonia* (1969), which saw Vallee donning the guise of amateur folklorist and guiding readers through fairyland. ("Magonia" means, roughly, "Magicland.") His intention

was to examine UFO experiences and ask if there are antecedents to them in supernatural legend and lore. Vallee's answer (p. 57) is that "the modern, global belief in flying saucers and their occupants is identical to an earlier belief in the fairy-faith." This is not so — "rarely similar, and then only vaguely so," is the correct answer; one need only read, for example, *An Encyclopedia of Fairies* (1976), by the late British folklorist Katharine Briggs, for overwhelming documentation to that effect — but nonetheless Vallee struck a nerve, especially among young-turk ufologists (including, alas, me) who, in the spirit of the times, were enthusiastically seeking to overthrow established thought, even UFO-establishment thoughts about mainstream-establishment-spurned notions such as extraterrestrial UFOs. (For the most part Vallee was not using this material as Erich von Daniken would, though portions of the first chapter have an ancient-astronautical ring and nothing to do with what comes after. One gets the impression that Vallee started out writing a different book from the one he finished. The book he finished seems to argue that an alien but not extraterrestrial intelligence capable of changing its appearance shares the earth with us.) From some jaded points of view the extraterrestrial hypothesis is a boring, mechanistic idea. Even today Vallee allows as how (his italics) "*I will be disappointed if they [UFOs] turn out to be nothing more than advanced spacecraft.*" A more exciting UFO phenomenon is one wrapped in mystification and paranoia, and that UFO phenomenon is one to which, from the evidence of his latest book, Vallee still owes his allegiance.

Vallee's *Passport* took much of ufology to Magonia, and much of ufology has never returned. (For details see my "Two Cheers for American Ufology," March/April 1989 *IUR*. For examples see Hilary Evans' later books and Britain's *Magonia*; the latter treats the UFO phenomenon as if it were a problem in literary criticism.) Vallee himself laments this but characteristically gets his villains wrong, one of whom, in Vallee's rendering if not history's, is not himself. In fact, it was Vallee more than anyone who opened the gates to evidence-free speculation about the UFO phenomenon. Vallee is certainly no nut, but that is not a conclusion one would automatically draw from reading his *The Invisible College* (1975) and *Messengers of Deception* (1979), exercises in seat-of-the-pants sociology, pop parapsychology and conspiracy

detection. These were books that should never have been written or published, but I certainly would not hold them against Vallee (since I feel the same way about the books I wrote that decade, not a happy one for the UFO literature) if he were to acknowledge his errors — he is always happy to acknowledge others' (even when, as we shall see, they don't always exist) — and perhaps even apologize to all those who took him overly seriously.

I would not ask for even that were it not for the relentless gracelessness of parts of *Confrontations*, subtitled "A Scientist's Search for Alien Contact" and scheduled for release this spring. This is a book, unlike any Vallee has written in over two decades, with a great deal to recommend it. In fact, as one of the most interesting UFO books (in a decade full of interesting UFO books) you are likely ever to read, it surprises us with the revelation that Vallee still has something to teach us. Less happily, it also reveals that Vallee has, as well, much to learn. But let us look at the good news first. I am happy to say there is a great deal of that.

When I say "good news," I mean that Vallee has significantly broadened our knowledge of the UFO phenomenon. I do not mean that the information Vallee supplies us with makes for pleasant reading. He says, in the book's most disturbing chapters, that UFOs are killing people. Now, this is the sort of thing that until recently one encountered only in *Weekly World News* headlines; more recently, some of ufology's susceptible souls, those with appetites for horror where their brains ought to be, have been enthralled by gory yarns in which the earth is a giant McDonald's, we're the Big Macs and the aliens are the hungry customers. Vallee is not talking about this. He is talking about events he, no armchair theorist, has documented personally in investigations conducted in one of the world's most remote and inaccessible areas. In doing so he becomes, in my estimation, something of a hero. As one reads this book's best parts, of which there are many, one will be inclined to forgive Vallee for a great deal. In the end, ironically, Vallee turns out to be the unforgiving one, with a whole new batch of charges to hurl at virtually everyone who is not Vallee.

Still, what will bring this book to the forefront of the UFO literature and make it a work of enduring value is Vallee's account of what he found in the backwaters of Brazil and Argentina, where few credible (or, for that matter, other) ufologists have gone, to investigate reports of UFO-related "fatal injuries in which the victim typically survived less than 24 hours," in the author's words. Also of considerable interest is his detailing of mostly-obscure physical-evidence cases; these involve metallic fragments allegedly left by passing UFOs. Vallee recounts his efforts to have these fragments analyzed and discusses, in illuminating fashion, the problems associated with analysis. He writes:

"The public, the military, and most scientists assume

that if an alien craft happened to pose for the perfect photograph or simply dropped some metal residue on the White House lawn it would be a straightforward matter to take this evidence to a state-of-the-art laboratory where it would be analyzed once and for all. My own experience with a number of such cases provides a radically different picture. While we know what to expect when we analyze a piece of a satellite or a meteorite, or when we reverse-engineer a technical device, we do not enjoy such luxury in the case of a suspected UFO sample. Laboratory analysts — literally — do not know where to start. The choices of investigative technique branch out to infinity, and there is little to guide the initial goals. We do not even know what is significant: is it the presence of a particular element, or its absence, or its combination with others?"

Vallee urges UFO groups to poll their members and try to collect all existing residue samples. "There may be as many as 30 specimens in the United States alone," he says, unfortunately without elaboration. Another chapter deals with UFO photographs of unusual interest. These were taken in Latin American countries and in most cases Vallee investigated them personally, interviewing the photographers and taking the pictures to laboratories for analysis. These photographs, which often show more than nebulous lights, compare in quality to the best ostensibly authentic UFO pictures. In other words, to all appearances these are photographs of unknown structured craft.

He goes on to review in absorbing detail cases wherein UFOs have affected plant growth and caused marks on the skin (he even has something new to say about the much-recorded "Dr. X" episode from France). This takes us to Chapter Nine, "Lethal Impact," which begins a review of UFO-related deaths. Readers should be warned, however, that a case to which Vallee refers in two paragraphs, concerning the alleged destruction of an African village by UFOs in 1954, has a dubious pedigree. I first encountered it in a paperback potboiler in the late 1960s; its authors cite no source for the tale, which I am willing to bet first appeared in a supermarket tabloid, the invention of an editorial staff writer. Fortunately (or perhaps not so fortunately, given their content) Vallee's other cases, especially those he has investigated himself and that are discussed in subsequent chapters (13, 14 and 15), are better documented.

He says, "In recent years the most remarkable cases of UFO-related injuries and deaths have taken place in the northeast of Brazil, in a vast region which extends from the mouth of the Amazon (Belem and the island of Marajo, which is located on the Equator about 300 miles from French Guiana) to San Luis and a small town called Teresina, 200 miles up the river from the coast. This is a vast area, the size of California...." Vallee relates, along with other extraordinary events, the deaths of five persons near Parnarama after they had encountered box-shaped UFOs emitting light beams. "These objects, which have

been called chupas by the local population, fly over the wooded areas and the river valleys at night," he writes. The victims were deer hunters who, as they hid in trees at night waiting for their prey, became prey themselves.

On the island of Colares a doctor examined 20 male patients who reported being struck by beams from UFOs. She told Vallee that the victims were barely able to walk, complained of dizziness and numbness, suffered irreparable hair loss, and were anemic. According to Vallee, "Their skin was blackened like a large sunburn where the light had hit them, with several red-purple circles, hot and painful, one to one-and-a-quarter inches in diameter.... Inside the red circles were two puncture marks resembling mosquito bites, with a hard core to the touch." These and other incidents caused a panic on the island. The Brazilian military sent a team to investigate and journalists took numerous photographs of the objects as they passed overhead. These pictures, Vallee says, were published in Brazilian newspapers at the time (summer 1977); but, Vallee cautions, "only the negatives have scientific potential. And all the negatives taken by the newspaper teams have left Brazil, purchased from the publishers by an unnamed American firm. Somebody in the United States owns a collection of records that contains [sic] the proof of the reality of the phenomenon." Since none of this has appeared in any American publication, one can't help speculating about the identity of the "firm" — one that presumably has money to spend with no accompanying profit motive and no desire to publicize its acquisition. Why, that sounds like....

On these and other sightings he has investigated in Argentina, France and northern California, Vallee is splendid. He has always been a talented writer who knows how to tell a good story. In person, as those of us who have met him are aware, he comes across as decent, open-minded and compassionate, all qualities one needs in the field as one seeks to gain the trust of suspicious or frightened individuals who have had UFO sightings. His personal qualities clearly endeared him to the people he dealt with, and the thoroughness of his investigation serves as a model all those who venture into the field would do well to emulate. His accomplishment is considerable. He has significantly enhanced the case for the reality of the UFO as a technological vehicle under the control of alien — and, most likely, extraterrestrial — intelligences. He has exposed the hollowness of the claims of both debunkers and psychosocial theoreticians. In other words, he has affirmed, with elaborations of the kind those read in the literature of the past two decades will recognize and accept, the traditional view of the UFO phenomenon, the same one that American ufology came to re-embrace (after some of its number took a few years' excursion into Magonian realms, at Vallee's direction) around 1980 or 1981.

Vallee would reject vehemently much of this characterization of what he has achieved. He seems to have

written a book he did not intend to write and whose implications have escaped him. Had he grasped those implications, he would have reserved his wrath for the psychosocial theorists who have written the physical evidence out of the UFO equation, not those who see it as central and who are trying to make scientific sense of it, as are proponents of the extraterrestrial hypothesis which, right or wrong, is — by any objective standard — eminently defensible, as powerfully demonstrated by Michael D. Swords in "Science and the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis in Ufology" in the most recent *Journal of UFO Studies*. In truth, Vallee's analysis is so consistently undercut by his data that one suspects two different men of opposing temperaments wrote *Confrontations* (a word that describes what happens here when speculation and evidence collide). One of these authors, a certain Jacques Vallee, is a hard-working, conscientious, intelligent investigator, the kind of whom ufology needs thousands; the other is a Jacques Vee, a quarrelsome, fuming, dogmatic ax-grinder determined to say whatever he wishes to say regardless of what the other guy comes up with, and also to demonstrate that only morons — aka "amateurs," "enthusiasts," "hardened believers," incompetents and irrationalists (no, this is not Paul Kurtz speaking) — could possibly arrive at conclusions other than those favored by Vee, even if those do not logically follow from Vallee's data. One could overlook all this if Vee were offering a compelling, insightful critique and substituting something credible and reasonable in the place of the extraterrestrial hypothesis. But where there should be an overwhelmingly persuasive new interpretation, there is only a sneer.

Vallee, as I have already noted, candidly acknowledges that he *wants* UFOs to be something more interesting than extraterrestrial visitors and in a way one can sympathize. After all, the weight of extravagant speculation, hope and fear that the UFO phenomenon has generated over the past four decades is by this time too mighty to be borne by what Vallee calls "nothing more than advanced spacecraft." And Vallee, as also noted, is the pioneer — outside contactee and occult circles, that is — of over-the-top speculation, and one is always reluctant to disabuse oneself entirely of ideas that moved one deeply in one's younger days. (In my case I recall my reluctant adult disenchantment with the major passion of my youth, science fiction, for which I managed, for a time, an affection even after I could no longer bear actually to read the stuff. It is perhaps worth noting that when Vallee is not writing UFO books, he is writing science-fiction novels.) The Jacques Vallee book betrays some evidence of a willingness to rethink old thoughts and to discard (if with no discernible fanfare) those no longer worth the thinking. There is, for example, mercifully little of the conspiracy craziness of *College* or *Messengers*. But then suddenly, for a paragraph or so there's that wild-eyed old Jacques Vee, wheezing in a dark corner about dangerous "cults" in which flying-saucer beliefs are being manipulated by potential Jim

Joneses. *Messengers*, in other words, has not entirely vanished down the memory hole. A good antidote to cult paranoia is J. Gordon Melton and Robert L. Moore's *The Cult Experience: Responding to the New Religious Pluralism* (1982), which I urge Vee to read before there is nothing of the dead horse left to kick.

Or is that a dead cow? Yes, cattle mutilations are back (did they ever go away?). Mutilations, Vee assures us, "may have a direct relationship to the UFO phenomenon." Oh, really? Well, he concedes, "I cannot yet prove this relationship." He could have added that neither can he "yet prove" the existence of cattle mutilations but he quickly passes over the many problems with the evidence to let us know that the "UFO research community, except for a few courageous investigators, prefers to sweep it under the rug and keep it there." The poor UFO research community gets it coming and going. Last time the ufologists got it for *believing* in mutilations and helping to circulate a false belief through society. That was the theme of Daniel Kagan and Ian Summers' *Mute Evidence* (1984), which actually is what got swept under the rug. The amnesia abductees suffer is as nothing compared to the amnesia of mutilation proponents where this book is concerned. Vee doesn't mention it and references to it are absent from *Alien Harvest: Further Evidence Linking Animal Mutilations and Human Abductions to Alien Life Forms* (1989), Linda Moulton Howe's magnum opus, to which Vee contributes an introduction with the indignant observation that "most researchers of the UFO phenomenon have stubbornly refused to consider [cattle mutilations], as I discovered when I brought the issue before the public in 1975 [sic] in *Messengers of Deception*." Sad to say, Kagan and Summers were right, Vee wrong. If Vee had deigned to associate with his fellow ufologists during the heyday of mutilations hype and joined them at the major UFO conferences, he would have seen Howe's documentary on the subject, *Strange Harvest*, over and over and over again, and he would have heard lectures on the subject and seen gruesome slides of dead cattle sufficient to last him in a lifetime. Howe spoke at the 1989 MUFON conference. So did the author of *Confrontations*. So what is Vee talking about?

Before the Kagan-Summers' book the only consistent skepticism I heard expressed was within CUFOS. For instance, Allan Hendry published a well-documented debunking, based on his own investigation of an allegedly UFO-linked alleged mutilation, in an early issue of *IUR*. When Kagan and Summers' book, far and away the most convincing and comprehensive work on the subject, was published, *IUR* reviewed it favorably and noted that it would now be up to mutilation proponents to counter the authors' negative findings. In the five years since, not a single substantive point *Mute Evidence* made has been refuted. Mutilation proponents have dealt with it, if at all, by claiming that (a) it isn't worth their time to deal

with it (imagine what conclusions a neutral observer would draw if ufologists had reacted that way to Klass' books) and (b) Kagan and Summers are probably government agents anyway. Under these circumstances it is depressing to think that mutilations still command a following in the UFO community. It's not us skeptics who owe the explanation here. I certainly would not want to state dogmatically that there is absolutely no such thing as an anomalous cattle mutilation, but if such a phenomenon exists, it is far rarer than proponents have claimed. If the evidence for the existence of the UFO phenomenon were as slight as the evidence for a mutilation phenomenon, I wouldn't be writing this and *IUR*, if it existed at all, would have another editor.

This is the story Vee doesn't tell. You would not know from his book that those ufologists who kept their distance from mutilations mania were acting from rational motives. If you were to believe Vee, "rational motives" and ufologists live in parallel universes whose boundaries never intersect. Vee is phobic about "hardened UFO believers" whose "accepted dogma" excludes those things Vee wants to believe in, such as "reports of ghosts, yetis, and other instances of cryptozoology as well as elves and spirits." He even wants us to include these in a UFO-classification system which he has devised and which he details at the end of the book. So you investigators out there protest that you haven't been running into ghosts, yetis and elves? Ah, don't try to fool Vee. He's on to you; he knows that "such incidents are generally withheld from publication by UFO enthusiasts."

The enduring myth of "incidents ... withheld from publication by UFO enthusiasts" is an article of faith among those for whom the UFO evidence is insufficient to satiate an appetite for wonder. If the UFO evidence is not up to the job of supporting a favored belief (in demons, angels, jinns, ultraterrestrials, conspiracies, Jungian metaphysics, superpsychokinesis, cosmic birth traumas, or whatever), the answer must be that the ufologists are covering up the "true" evidence. No reason to believe that has ever emerged and the charge is absurd, given the fiercely competitive nature of ufology and the practical impossibility of concealing recurring phenomena. It is, of course, true that Investigator X, who favors Theory A but in the field comes upon evidence for Theory B, may fail to mention as much in his report on the case in the *Theory A UFO Journal*. Fortunately, Investigator X is not the only person on whose word we have to rely as we endeavor to understand the UFO phenomenon. We also have Investigator Y, who favors Theory B, and who suspects X hasn't told the whole truth. Thus he either reinvestigates X's case and produces the missing data or finds a case of his own with the evidence he's looking for, and he publishes same in the *International Theory B Reporter*. For a cover-up of the kind proposed by Vee and others to succeed, there would have to be absolute unanimity of thought among ufologists, which there isn't (if there were, ufologists wouldn't

fight so much), and those of us who have been on the scene for a long time would have to be harboring dark secrets which we are making sure never see the light of day. It just isn't happening, and anybody who believes it is fooling himself.

Vee, as it turns out (as is usually the case when the charge is made), makes no real effort to produce evidence to support the claim. The best he can do is to relate an anecdote such as this one: Nearly 2 1/2 years after a woman, Mrs. Victor, allegedly experienced a CE3, she "was severely beaten by an invisible entity" and "had to spend six days in the hospital." Vee notes that early in this century a French nun and missionary named Marie-Therese Noblet, in the course of frequent ecstatic states, also suffered occasional "beatings by invisible agents." Vee has not the slightest doubt the CE3 percipient's beating is connected with her UFO sighting and that experiences like Noblet's are clues to the UFO phenomenon. ("The literature of religious miracles and the lives of mystics abounds with well-documented accounts of physical manifestations, including beatings, that are usually classified as possession phenomena or manifestations of so-called evil powers, although they generally do not cause permanent harm to the person. This body of literature should be diligently studied by those who are serious about investigating UFO sightings.") He even gives vent to a "feeling of anger and frustration" about those feeble-minded UFO believers who in "their eagerness to obtain definite answers, or simply to validate their own preconceptions about the extraterrestrial nature of the phenomenon," screw, then cover, up everything.

To those who may object that surely Vee has his tongue in his cheek here, let me assure you that a careful reading of the paragraphs in question (and all of the Vee part of the book) indicates the man is deadly serious. Let's remove Vee's blinders and take another look at the above. First off, and one should think obviously, there is no necessary connection between the CE3 and Mrs. Victor's (ostensibly) paranormal beating, whatever Vee implies to the contrary. Perhaps if this second extraordinary event had occurred, say, 2 1/2 days after the UFO encounter, the coincidence may have been meaningful and it almost certainly would have been noted in any report on the case, whether prepared by ET-phile or ET-phobe. Even then, in the absence of a pattern of such beatings reported in the wake of CE3s, the episode would remain only a curiosity. Even Vee is unable to uncover a parallel in UFO experience and can find it only in the strange mental life of an obsessed religious mystic. This is what makes him angry and frustrated at his fellow ufologists? As Vee puts it, "Witnesses like Mrs. Victor and her family should be helped, not thrown into further confusion by those who investigate the UFO mystery." I entirely concur and to Vee I say, Investigator, heal thyself.

The claim that ufologists are covering up the "true" evidence usually comes down to arguments as strange as

Vee's. The operating assumption is that if a UFO witness tells an investigator that at some point in his life he had a paranormal experience, that experience *must* be linked to the UFO event and an investigator who fails to grasp that and report it is an "enthusiast," an "amateur," and "hardened believer" in ETs, in Vee's litany of villainous personality types. In fact, according to a number of polls taken on the subject, most people believe that they have had at least one paranormal experience at some point in their lives; furthermore, as sociologist Andrew Greeley wrote after a comprehensive survey in the early 1970s (my emphasis), "Almost a *fifth* of the American population reports frequent paranormal experiences...." That being the case, is it any wonder that some UFO witnesses also report other anomalous events in their lives? Until Vee and other critics can show that UFO witnesses, or even that subset claiming close encounters, have significantly more paranormal experiences than other people, we would be wise to take the critics' claims with a large measure of skepticism — unless, of course, we believe, as Vee may, that ufology is simply a branch of demonology.

Vee's ability to detect connections invisible to the rest of us reaches its most bizarre extreme in his remarks on the "extraordinary ... diligent, painstaking" work of Bertrand Meheust, French speculationist (a word I prefer to theorist in cases such as these). Consider this: In 1930 an obscure somebody named Ege Tilms wrote a science-fiction story about a man who underwent what in some (though not all — my qualification, not Vee's) details anticipates later UFO-abduction stories. Vee tells us that in the early 20th Century, according to Meheust, other stories told of spaceships visiting earth and abducting people. So? So this: "It is predictable that many researchers will go on ignoring this fact...." I should hope so. Just what is Vee trying to establish here? Does he know himself?

Must it be pointed out that interest in the possibility that other worlds are inhabited is at least as old as human intellectual history and probably as old as human imagination? Vee needs to expand his reading beyond Meheust; I urge him to start with two splendid books, both published by Cambridge University Press: Steven J. Dick's *Plurality of Worlds: The Origins of the Extraterrestrial Life Debate from Democritus to Kant* (1982) and Michael J. Crowe's *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate 1750-1900: The Idea of a Plurality of Worlds from Kant to Lowell* (1986). In speculating about the nature of living beings elsewhere, philosophers, scientists, theologians, occultists, satirists, hoaxers and science-fiction writers have penned and published untold millions of words. Virtually every conceivable (and not a few inconceivable) depictions of extraterrestrials, their activities and their interests have been exposed to the wonderment of readers. If somewhere in all of this somebody did not at some point conjure up something

(even if only generally) that real ETs might do, that would be surprising. In fact, Vee's (and Meheust's) argument could be turned on itself: What makes the UFO evidence so interesting from the viewpoint of the extra-terrestrial hypothesis is *how limited* the range of UFO activity is when compared to the limitlessness of human invention documented in the massive non-UFO literature on ETs. Vee takes no note, of course, of the incomparably larger body of that literature that describes ET activity utterly unlike anything reported by UFO witnesses.

For a critique involving prior science-fiction stories to have any meaning, one would have to demonstrate that the UFO claimant had read them or at least been exposed to their contents. In the history of psychical research, for example, some reincarnation and spirit-return stories have been traced to printed or other sources with which investigators were able to establish the claimants were familiar. These investigators, unlike Vee, were not content simply to observe that such sources existed. Moreover, in these instances the fit was a lot tighter than the very loose one proposed by Vee and Meheust.

If Vee despises ufologists, he is apoplectic on the subject of abductions. That would be excusable if his criticisms had substance, which they do not. Abductions just become another club with which to beat the "amateurs," "enthusiasts," "hardened believers" and other fools lacking Vee's clairvoyant vision. The limitations of Vee's approach are apparent in his criticism of Thomas E. Bullard's observation, "Perhaps the least controversial generalization about abductions is that they are a recent phenomenon." Not many people would disagree with this to-most-of-us-obvious remark, but not Vallee, who writes, "Many years before, I had shown in *Passport to Magonia* that contact with ufonauts was only a modern extension of the age-old tradition of contact with non-human consciousness...." The book does no such thing, unless one automatically equates quantum leaps in logic with quantum leaps in knowledge (the former occur, in life as in Vee's writings, far more frequently than the latter), but Vee here insists on belaboring the point, claiming that Bullard's "statement ignores not only the repeated invitations by 1897 airship occupants to take human witnesses on aerial trips, but the persistent stories of abductions by dwarfish creatures throughout the folklore of every culture. Archbishop Agobard of Lyons, in the ninth century, has left a very clear description of the four individuals who were about to be stoned to death as sorcerers by a crowd because they came out of a 'cloudship' from Magonia. The abduction stories began with Ezekiel on the shores of the river Chebar in 593 B.C. and never stopped."

Agobard's account, even if we take it to be of a UFO event (which we ought to do, if at all, with great caution), is not necessarily of an abduction. Even assuming both the truth of the tale and the legitimacy of the UFO interpretation (a leap of faith, surely), we can as easily

conclude from the sketchy (*not* "very clear") account available to us that the "four individuals" were members of the "cloudship" crew as that they were normal folk whom the crew had snatched up. The other "abductions" Vee points to don't have even the faint credentials of the Agobard story. Vee may be the last living ufologist who still believes stories of airship occupants taking people on trips were anything other than fiction. Every landing-occupant airship case it has been possible to investigate has proven, without exception, to be a journalistic hoax or local prank. Even many of the fly-over sightings have been accounted for, mostly as astronomical in origin, by such careful researchers as Bullard and Robert Neeley. (Earlier in the book Vee credits himself and Donald Hanlon with spurring "interest in the 1897 wave." In fact, it was I who did that with a series of articles, beginning in 1965, in England's *Flying Saucer Review*.) Vee refuses to consider that earlier "UFO" events occurred within cultural contexts different from our own (in 1897 the context was the widespread practice of newspaper hoaxes and small-town liars' clubs). In drawing on traditional beliefs, Vee does to the folklorists what von Daniken does to the archaeologists: rip their findings out of their historical and social environments, tear away all that doesn't fit, and cram what little remains into a reductionist cubbyhole.

In her revealing book *The Medieval Vision: Essays in History and Perception* (1976) Carolly Erickson writes that the people of the Middle Ages occupied an "enchanted world" in which they literally saw things in ways we now can barely comprehend. In this enchanted world, she says, "the boundaries of imagination and factuality are constantly shifting. At one time the observed physical limits of time and space may be acknowledged; at another they may be ignored, or, from another point of view, transcended. Yet so constant and so automatic is this expansion and contraction of field of perceived reality that it goes on unnoted and unreconciled by medieval writers. It belongs to those tacit norms in all cultures which, because they are more basic than perception itself, are rarely explicitly acknowledged." Erickson writes that the intellectual life — and through it, albeit in plainer form, ordinary society — were dominated by Neoplatonism, one of whose principles was that the "forces of divine creation are unleashed by the power of sight. Sight was conceived not as a passive recording of experience but as a form of creative energy."

The subject of how earlier peoples experienced reality (and themselves; some scholars argue that such concepts as "childhood" and even "personality" are relatively recent inventions) is the focus of a growing body of historical writing, and we shall not linger on it here, though the reading of it is essential to anyone trying to trace UFO stories past the 20th Century. My point, however, remains: If even late-19th-Century "UFO" material is suspect, when it turns out that even our

great-grandparents' generation is in some way unknowable to us (why did it consider newspaper lies, which we would regard as scandalous, acceptable?), you can multiply that unknowableness as you figure your way back through the generations before. I am surprised, I must say, that Vee joins von Daniken in identifying Ezekiel as an abductee, as if a considerable biblical scholarship had not placed Ezekiel's story firmly in the context of a range of related visionary experiences from that time and place (and moreover, as if subsequent chapters of Ezekiel, which render insensible any "UFO" connection and which reductionists of the Vallee-von Daniken school habitually ignore, did not exist). Vee actually criticizes Budd Hopkins for saying that *Passport* contains "folklore of obviously uncertain authenticity." Hopkins' sentiment may be expressed naively, but what it says is true on a level Vee seems never to have thought about. Whatever their faults (and Vee's inability to find their real ones does not mean they do not exist in abundance), most American ufologists have wisely resisted the temptation to follow Vee into the thickets of Magonia.

After slamming ufologists for not rushing to embrace a vast range of folkloric and visionary phenomena as exactly comparable to modern UFO abductions, Vee resurrects what I call the Unkillable Canard: that abduction accounts related under hypnosis emerge in the form they do because the ufologists demand they emerge that way. In Vee's words early in the book (and repeated *ad nauseam* in slightly different phrasing throughout the text), "It was already clear that the study of abductions was hopelessly mired in the complexities and pitfalls of the use of hypnosis in the hands of believers who were subtly — or not so subtly — influencing the outcome of the interviews they conducted." Rubbish. That general hypothesis, a testable one (unlike, as it turns out, the specific version Vee subsequently offers), was falsified by Bullard, who found that, while it is certainly true hypnosis can be misused, it is "clear" (to use Vee's word) that hypnosis does not shape abduction narratives, since comparative analysis reveals that consciously-recalled accounts (nearly one third of the total, as unnoted by Vee) and hypnotically-recalled ones are identical in all important aspects; furthermore, that is true no matter who the hypnotist was in the hypnosis cases. That doesn't stop Vee, though, from claiming falsely (and drawing, without credit [or blame], from the wisdom of ufology's Inspector Clouseau, Philip J. Klass) that different investigators of differing temperaments find (i.e., force abductees to fantasize) aliens that reflect the investigators' personalities. Rather than belabor the point, I refer readers to Bullard's treatment of these issues in his two-volume *UFO Abductions: The Measure of a Mystery* (1987), *IUR* (November/December 1987) and the most recent (1989) issue of *Journal of UFO Studies*. Until critics such as Vee address Bullard's findings, we have no obligation to pay attention to them — which does not mean, of course, that we should be complacent about

methodological and ethical questions in abduction investigation. What I do mean is that critics, before they open their mouths or poke the keys on their typewriters, should be sure they know what they're talking or writing about.

In another of his assaults on "enthusiastic UFO researchers" (nobody who disagrees with Vee, it appears, is lacking in enthusiasm), Vee weighs in with these astonishing words (my italics): Enthusiasts "who hypnotize their witnesses in an effort to validate their pre-established theories" — naturally they could have no other motive — "are ignoring this fact[:] Even when they are careful to avoid leading questions and blatant contagion, their belief system is already obvious to their subjects and it can only be strengthened by the hypnotic process — not to mention *possible telepathic contamination*." In other words, there is no way in which the hypothesis of investigator-led hypnotic testimony can be falsified. Even when every care is taken, the subject will read the hypnotist's thoughts! I think that even the most excitable Magonian short of Vee himself will here find his adrenalin abruptly slowing.

A personal note here: The first abduction case I ever investigated personally was in the early 1970s (long before the era of *Missing Time*, *Intruders* and *Communion*). The subjects were a couple who had had an encounter with a UFO and its occupants, but portions of the story were missing from conscious recall. I concluded that hypnosis might be usefully employed in this situation and I sought professional help. I went to an academic psychologist, J, who said he knew a colleague, W, a psychiatrist, who used hypnosis in his practice. J approached W and explained the situation. W, who had never heard of "UFO abductions," was incredulous that J seemed to think such a phenomenon might exist, but he finally agreed, despite his repeated expressions of certainty that nothing would come of it, to perform the hypnosis — alone, without my presence — in his office. (I had taken pains not to indicate to the couple that I thought an abduction may have occurred; I indicated only that hypnosis might help refresh their memory.) Suffice it to say that the couple, hypnotized separately and directed not to remember what they had said after returning to waking consciousness, told stories that were not only mutually confirmatory but comparable in all particulars to what would become the classic abduction reports of the 1980s. I trust Vee will not contend that the couple's psychic-brain-picking faculties reached outside W's office and sought me out elsewhere in town — or plunged into the future in search of sources on which to base abduction fantasies.

Confrontations is top-heavy with eccentric claims and shaky speculations, and its objections to the extraterrestrial hypothesis (as in the introduction to Part Four) are trivial and easily answerable, and most have been addressed above. In those that remain, Vee

even advances arguments that contradict each other. In one paragraph he claims the "UFO operators ... display recognizable emotions" (a dubious claim, but let's let it pass) and in the next he complains that the "growing body of reports regarding abductions display behavioral patterns on the part of the operators which contradict the idea of scientific, medical or genetic experiments. Simpler, more effective methods are already available in earth-based science to accomplish all the alleged objectives of these Aliens." In other words, the aliens get it first for acting like human beings and next for not acting like human beings. In any case, this is an extraordinarily simplistic reading of the complex and profoundly strange material that is emerging from serious abduction investigations. Some of this material has already appeared in the literature, and more is to follow. Vee's enthusiastic desire to sweep these issues under the rug will help no one.

Of course Vee is not the only ufologist who has sought to discard, discredit or ignore phenomena that make him uncomfortable. In the 1950s and into the 1960s one of the major research organizations rejected CE3 reports and even (so it is alleged in a letter I received while writing this article) at some point cleared its files of all unsolicited CE3 accounts that came its way. (Other groups, such as APRO and Civilian Saucer Intelligence [New York], however, early recognized the significance of these reports and went to some effort to document them.) Today the CE3 is a respected member of the community of UFO manifestations. But now, for some, a subset of CE3s, the abduction, generates the same kinds of anxieties its less exotic cousins used to, and vigorous efforts are underway to remove the offending presence from view. Because some abduction accounts emerge under hypnosis, ufologist-critics, Vee prominently among them, have a convenient excuse to ignore them, even if hypnotic confabulation turns out under objective examination to be a red herring. In response the critics just repeat themselves, only in a louder voice or, as in Vee's case, with greater condescension.

Another phenomenon that many ufologists ignored for a long time was the crashed-disc story. Vee continues that discredited practice in his book. It is remarkable that in the late 1980s someone could write a serious survey of the UFO evidence and ignore the Roswell incident, but Vee manages never to mention it. Perhaps, considering his phobia about the amateurs, enthusiasts and believers out there, he couldn't bear to do so without having to imply that some very good work is being done by ufologists, including those who — like Stan Friedman, Bill Moore, Don Schmitt, Kevin Randle and Mark Rodeghier — at considerable personal trouble and expense have gone to one of the most remote regions of our country and done what most of us would have thought impossible: documented something (through the testimony of over 160 informants) that occurred long ago,

in 1947, and that may well be the most important event in UFO history. Another problem Vee may have had was in coming to an unpalatable conclusion: that the vehicle and the entities who accompanied it surely did not hail from Magicland.

Let us now return to Jacques Vallee, a more congenial, reasonable fellow than Jacques Vee, and welcome him back to active participation in ufology. I wish him well and I urge you to read *Confrontations*, which you will find a fascinating and exciting book. I also hope that in the future Vallee will understand that he is part of a community, that not everyone who coexists with him there is the sort of certifiable idiot Vee caricatures in his part of the book, and that one function of a community is to provide critical guidance where needed. *Confrontations*, which surely needs such guidance, is an object lesson in the dangers of intellectual isolation. While it is certainly true that one's colleagues can be a source of aggravation and, on occasion, embarrassment, it is just as true that without them one runs the risk of getting caught up in one's own fantasies, wishful thoughts and airy speculations. One's colleagues can ask the necessary questions, such as this one: Since when should one demand more of the UFO evidence than it can provide? Just such a demand underlies Vallee's intense desire not to have a UFO phenomenon consisting of something so "disappointing" as extraterrestrial spacecraft. If he seeks magic, metaphysics and spiritual transformation instead, he should join occult and contactee groups, where evidence is not at issue. But if Vallee is serious about probing the intelligence behind the UFO phenomenon, he will have to develop a keener respect not only for the rules of evidence but for the findings of his colleagues who, he will learn as he rejoins the larger world they never left, are not all fools. ■

CUFOS photo exhibit...

March 16-18: Clay, New York, Penn-Can Mall

April 6-8: Mesquite, Texas, Town East Mall

Coming in *IUR*...

Abductions — a shamanic perspective
by Bill Chalker

Roswell: the rest of the story
by Don Schmitt and Kevin D. Randle

Samples from the Mundrabilla CE2

by Keith Basterfield

■ ■ Keith Basterfield, one of Australia's leading UFO investigators and theorists, is author of *Close Encounters of an Australian Kind: UFOs — The Image Hypothesis* (1981).

The January 20, 1988, close encounter report from Mundrabilla, Western Australia, made headlines around the world. The Knowles family related that a UFO had interacted with their car and that as a result a black ashlike material was deposited both on the exterior and in the interior of the vehicle.

Since that time a number of samples of material taken from the car have been analyzed. Details of some of these analyses have been published. This article presents all the details of analyses known to me; it also reports the results from the sample in police possession.

Three sets of samples are known to have been taken. In chronological order they were by the South Australian Police Department, the Australian Mineral Development Laboratory and the Victorian UFO Research Society.

South Australian Police Department

This sampling was conducted some seven or so hours after the event and some 600 kilometers from the reported scene of the encounter. It was taken by a senior constable of the Port Lincoln crime scene section; the officer happened to be in Ceduna, South Australia, on other business at the time.

He viewed the vehicle and interviewed the Knowles family. He observed, "The exterior of the vehicle was covered with a fine black/grey dust similar to a road film left on a vehicle in need of washing. That same dust was obvious on the upholstery within the vehicle." Two samples were taken from the roof of the car and the hood — i.e., both from the exterior of the vehicle where the "ash" is said to have been.

After several months of negotiation I received half of the original police sample. My portion consisted of two glass slides, each 75mm by 25mm. Each glass slide had a piece of sticky tape with sample attached to it; thus the sample was between tape and glass. The sticky tape was some 75mm by 10mm.

I looked around for an analyst and eventually received a kind offer from Stan Gordon of the Pennsylvania Association for the Study of the Unexplained. The material was thus analyzed in late 1989. The analyst, J. Mathers, wrote:

[It was] mounted ... with the particle side up on a Scanning Electron Microscope, SEM, stub. The stub was carbon coated to prevent charging. The sample was examined in our JEOL 840 SEM with its associated X-ray Energy Dispersive Analyzer which can perform chemical analysis on very small particles.

I found two types of particles on the sample. One was NaCl crystals (Table Salt is the same composition). The other was clay particles with Sodium (Na), Magnesium (Mg), Aluminum (Al), Silicon (Si), Sulfur (S), Chlorine (Cl), Potassium (P), Calcium (Ca), and perhaps some Iron (Fe) and Copper (Cu). The Iron and Copper may have come from the chamber wall. These same elements are found in many clays. An X-ray specimen was taken of one particle and the spectrum is enclosed in this report along with a photomicrograph of the particle taken at 1000X. I looked at several particles and did not find any other particles of interest.

Australian Mineral Development Laboratory

Channel 7, the television station that intercepted the Knowleses on their way to see UFO Research (South Australia), paid to have an independent analysis performed. The collection was conducted on January 22 at Wudinna after the vehicle had traveled some 800 kilometers from the scene. Besides a visual examination of both vehicle and blown tire, a portable radiation meter was used but revealed no areas showing count rates above the background levels. The report stated:

The examination revealed no evidence of any significant ash or dust on the body of the vehicle or in the interior. A quantity of black dust was found on the exterior of the front wheels. The dust was also found in greater quantities on the inner surface of the wheels. Some of this material was sampled....

The dust samples were analyzed using X-ray diffraction and emission-spectroscopy techniques. The analyst wrote:

Emission spectroscopy indicated the following chemical compositions for the dust and a control sample taken from brake pads.

Element	Results in percentage	
	Ford	Amdel control
Iron as oxide	43.4	80.1
Silicon as oxide	14.3	2.6
Calcium as oxide	2.4	0.5
Aluminum as oxide	2.3	0.4
Magnesium as oxide	4.6	2.9
Barium	3.5	3.3
Copper	5.5	<0.005
Zinc	2.6	0.2
Lead	0.9	0.03
Tin	1.9	<0.005
Molybdenum	0.8	0.0006

The X-ray diffraction patterns showed the presence of the following crystalline forms in the samples.

Sample — Ford

Compound	
Magnetite	Abundant
Brass	Abundant
Molybdenum sulphide	Trace
Quartz	
Hematite	
Baryte	
Calcite	

Sample — Amdel control

Compound	
Graphite	Abundant
Iron	Abundant
Baryte	Minor
Magnetite	Minor

The analyses are considered to be characteristic of dust from wearing brake pads and discs. No significant foreign compounds were present in the dust samples.

Victorian UFO Research Society

On February 1, 1988, with the car in Adelaide, a distance of 1300 kilometers from the encounter scene, the Victorian UFO Research Society took samples. These were from the inside of the vehicle and were removed via vacuuming.

Unfortunately VUFORS has never released a copy of any scientific analysis performed on its samples. I understand that at least two separate analyses were performed, one at the Monash University in Melbourne

and the other by Richard F. Haines in California.

Monash University minerologist Alf Hohmann conducted unspecified tests whose results were later written about in a mass media weekly magazine, *Australasian Post* (November 26, 1988). The article stated that the sample consisted mainly of potassium chloride with traces of other salts. In an interview with Bob Fletcher of ParaNet, Melbourne, Hohmann said that although potassium chloride is not an unusual substance to find, it is unusual to find it in the quantity that existed in the sample.

I obtained a copy of the results of the testing conducted through Richard Haines. In a report dated June 10, 1988, the analyst examined samples of dust from the disc brakes and from the rear floor. The dust from the disc brakes was fundamentally different in composition from the rear-floor dust sample. The brake sample contained iron, copper, silicon and sulphur. There was no chlorine in this sample. The rear floor dust sample was composed mainly of fibers. Elements found here were oxygen, carbon, calcium, silicon and aluminum, with trace levels of sodium and potassium. One fiber also contained chlorine.

Comments

One common criticism of all samplings is that no one undertook analysis of control samples of soil from the site of the encounter. Another problem is that VUFORS, although it claims to have a several-hundred-page report on the event, has not released it. I am sure I speak for all serious investigators when I express the hope the organization will do so in the immediate future. ■

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The airship scare and war hysteria

by Steven A. Arts

■ ■ Steven A. Arts, a reporter-photographer who lives in Iowa, has done considerable archival research into late-19th-Century "airship" reports.

What was the cause of the airship fever that began in western Canada and northern California in late 1896? It is likely that we will never have a certain answer to that question. After eight years of airship research I propose one motivating force behind the phenomenon, although I certainly do not pretend it is the only cause.

It is well known that war hysteria can lead people to believe all sorts of nonsense. Just such hysteria afflicted the people of late 1896, barely two years before the United States became involved in the Spanish-American War, and Cuba was at the center of it all. But there were other war-related concerns as well.

During this period of airship excitement, headlines about airships in Sacramento and San Francisco newspapers had to give way to often lurid ones about Cuban rebels fighting Spanish colonial troops. In my opinion these stories of war, combined with a burning desire by mankind to fly, figured largely in airship mania. All one has to do, to see that this is true, is to check the pertinent newspapers on microfilm.

Cuba and the airships were connected in many people's minds. Consider, for example, the page-one headline from the *San Francisco Call* of November 25, 1896: "Mission of the Aerial Ship — Will Probably Be Used to Destroy the City of Havana." The article that followed reported that William Henry Harrison Hart, former attorney general of California, had taken over "representing" the airship inventor from attorney George "Airship" Collins — or so claimed Hart. Hart's inventor changed identity, and even nationality, at the drop of a hat.

"General Hart admitted his new and mysterious responsibilities yesterday," the article reported, "and then made the sensational announcement that the airship was to be used in the service of the Cuban insurgents and intimated that Havana was to be the first point of attack."

Hart appears to be the main pro-rebel proponent of the period but it must be said that most Americans

sympathized with the Cuban rebels. After all, two years later the United States went to war with Spain, supposedly to support the rebels.

A headline in the rival *Examiner* the same day read, "General Hart Advises That the Ship Be Sold for Millions to Cuba and Used to Destroy Havana." Hart gave interviews to the local press. "I said that from the airship the city could be destroyed in 48 hours," he claimed. "The ship would be taken to Cuba or to the neighborhood." Hart was not the only person prophesying the airship's future terrible use to bomb from above.

The next day the *Examiner* attacked Gen. Weyler, the Spanish commander of Cuba. "The Thunderbird Preparing to Throw Eggs at Weyler," said part of the headlines on page 10. The Thunderbird, obviously the airship, "is busy getting ready to drop a hot bomb on Weyler's head," the paper alleged.

True, Hart was pro-rebel but he was a capitalist at heart. On November 27 the *Call* declared on page 14: "It Is to Be Used to Destroy the City of Havana for Junta — Ten Millions Is Demanded." Hart must have been an early version of a modern arms dealer, except that his product didn't exist.

The next day the *Call* reported on page one, "Attaches a Balloon to the Warship of the Air." The former attorney general claimed now that the airship was the invention of an associate of Gen. Antonio Maceo's electrician cousin. Maceo was a rebel commander in Cuba.

This claim was further advertised the next day when the *Call* published a letter written by Hart and discussing the airship inventor he supposedly represented. "He also stated," Hart wrote of the reclusive inventor, "that he was a cousin of Mr. Linn, who was Antonio Maceo's electrician, and that he expected to take it to Cuba for the purpose of aiding in the capture of Havana as soon as he could perfect it and acquaint his associates with the handling of it."

On December 1 an article in the *Call* said: "The subject uppermost in the general's mind, the freeing of Cuba from Spain, came to the surface in the conversation, and the attorney said that 'the inventor is likely at any time to pack up his smaller airship and start for the scene of bloodshed and trouble.'"

Even as late as January 16, 1897, the *Call* published
continued on page 24

Defining the boundaries

by John B. Alexander

■ ■ John B. Alexander, Ph.D., a former president of the International Association for Near-Death Studies, is manager of anti-materiel technology in the Defense Initiative Office at Los Alamos National Laboratory. As a colonel in the U.S. Army, he served as director of Advanced Systems Concepts Office, U.S. Army Laboratory Command, and chief of Advanced Human Technology, Army Intelligence and Security Command, among many other assignments. He is coauthor of the forthcoming book *The Warrior's Edge*.

In the late 1970s subjective reports from persons who had been close to death came to public attention primarily through the writings of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Raymond Moody. Initially these reports were believed to be relatively isolated events which offered what appeared to be a unique opportunity to examine a phenomenon with either eschatological implications or a psychophysiological etiology not yet explored. Soon scientists began a multidisciplinary study of the newly-defined topic area and organizations formed to promote that field.

It was quickly determined that the number of incidents was far greater than had been estimated. It was also noted that significant numbers of persons, after having a near-death experience (NDE), were experiencing difficulty in adjusting psychologically to the rigors of daily life. This pattern of events is paralleled in the UFO field, initially with limited numbers of sightings followed by larger numbers of reports, and more recently in the advent of abduction cases.

Within a few years the NDE researchers arrived at an internal bifurcation which almost destroyed the field. One group was interested in continuing scientific investigation, while the other wanted to emphasize the need for sociopsychological support for persons who were traumatized by the NDE. The positions polarized and often became incompatible, fragmenting the fledgling field. Similar strife can now be noted in the UFO community. Actually, NDEs may be easy to reconcile. At least there is no conspiracy to deal with unless you count machina-

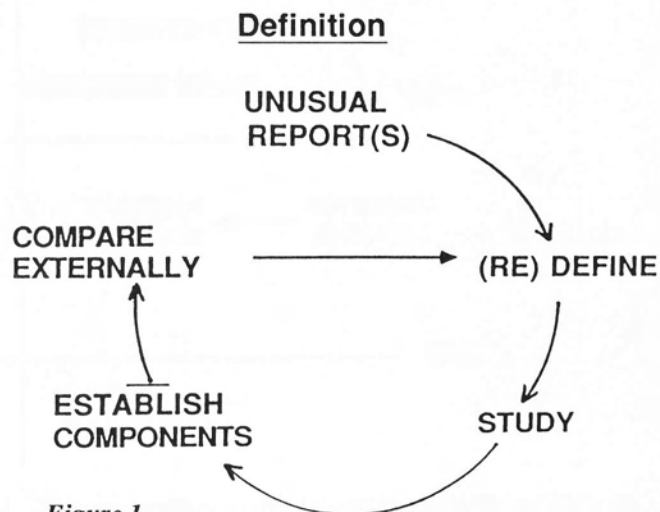


Figure 1

tions from the devil, as espoused by some religious fundamentalists.

To explore further the parallels in phenomenological studies we can examine the history of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) and the UFO community. As a past president and board member of IANDS, I had an opportunity to observe closely the organizational transformations that occurred and continue to this day.

The first step in studying a phenomenon is to define what is to be studied (Figure 1). This is no easy task when the boundaries are so unclear as they are in either field, NDEs or UFOs. Definition will also be colored by those involved in the definition process and the biases they bring with them. "Biases" in this context is not pejorative but simply acknowledges that we all have them based on our prior experiences. In this case the reason one chooses to study the field may affect the definition. The position one comes from — as physicist, psychologist, philosopher, writer, experiencer, observer, or whatever — will greatly influence one's view of the field.

With both NDEs and UFOs, first there were a number of unusual reports. Many were anecdotal with few objective data to support them. Because of the high strangeness of the experience, many observers/experiencers did not publicly report the occurrence. Rather, these reports were passed on as closely-held secrets or in

Evolution of Phenomena

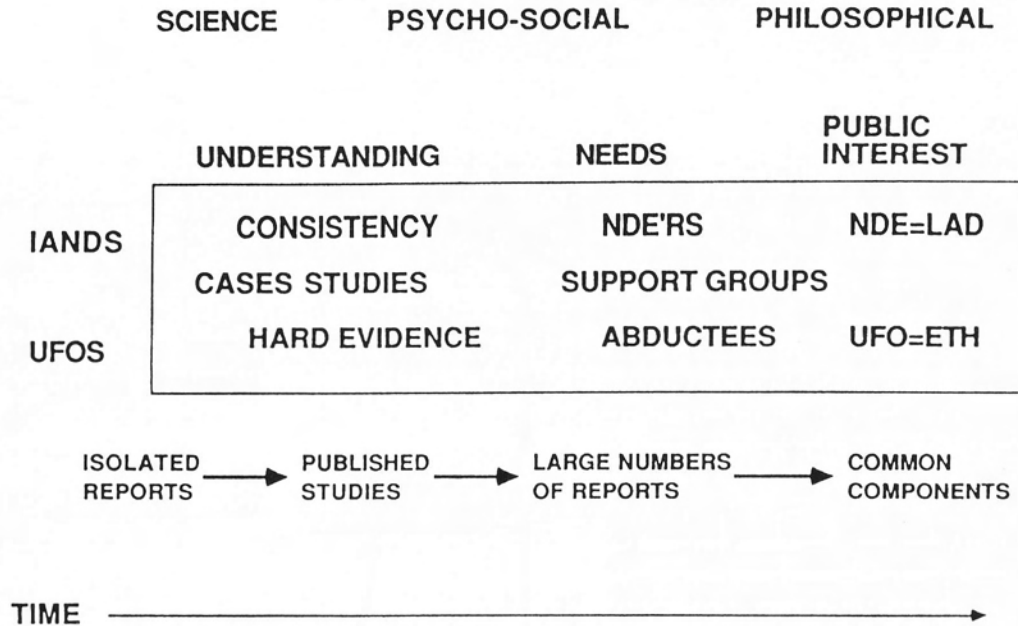


Figure 2

an almost mythological format. Once sufficient quantities of reports were generated and a subset established the necessary qualitative basis, curious researchers tried to establish a general definition.

Following the definition phase, studies begin to emerge. At first these tend to be reiterations of the experiences, usually with an attempt to correlate subjective reports with objective facts. A number of firsthand accounts also appear. These accounts are often sensational in nature and heavily based on the writers' motives.

Since all "good science" is reductionistic, the next step is to establish the components of the phenomenon by examining the early studies. Kenneth Ring's *Life at Death: A Scientific Examination of the Near-Death Experience* (1980) is a classic example. In the NDE field this book provided a comprehensive look at the phenomenon and demographically proved they are not an artifact of a known parameter: age, sex, religious background, or other established factor.

Once certain components are established for the phenomenon, then comparisons are made externally. With NDEs the comparison was made between an NDE and an out-of-body experience (OOBE). In the UFO arena sightings of alien beings were compared with other beings from universal folklore. As new theories emerge new comparisons are made. These comparisons serve to test the inclusionary or exclusionary limits of the field. Initially these limits will not be readily accepted by all involved in the study, leading to early fragmentation.

Based on the external comparison, the process of (re)definition begins. Scientists must decide whether or

not the factors provide a common bond and thus should expand the definition. In other cases the reevaluation may tend to narrow the field due to conscious exclusion of certain kinds of data.

When we examine this concept in light of both NDEs and UFOs, we can see the evolution of acceptance of a phenomenon (Figure 2). Over time we first see the isolated reports followed by studies of individual or a few cases. Soon it is learned that there are many more cases than previously suspected. As case studies become published and enter the public domain, others who believe they have had the same or similar experiences come forward and relate their stories. Examples of this come from both fields. With NDEs it was George Gallup, Jr.'s, *Adventures in Immortality* (1982), which reported that approximately five percent of the adult population of the United States claimed to have undergone the near-death experience. That is over eight million persons — a far cry from the few isolated cases previously thought to occur.

Abduction studies have progressed in much the same way. Initially we heard of a few isolated cases. Then, as studies by Budd Hopkins, David M. Jacobs, R. Leo Sprinkle and others became available, we suddenly found that the number of abductees may be far higher than we ever dreamed.

Two other factors may be noticed at this point. As phenomenal cases become popular, there will be a number of attempted exploitations for a host of reasons. Persons seeking publicity will come forward to assert that

Generational Qualities

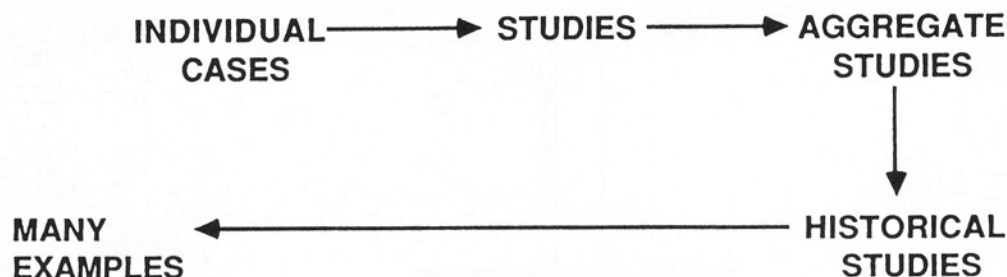


Figure 3

they, too, have had the described experience. In both fields steps were taken to control contamination efforts. These steps include delaying release of data until facts were established and then withholding key elements of information which allowed for cross-checking. The second issue is that we find that some key researchers are also experiencers of the phenomena. With NDEs both Kubler-Ross and Moody had an NDE prior to publicly reporting their studies. In UFOs we later hear that Leo Sprinkle believes himself to be an abductee.

The next aspect noticed is the common components between phenomena. At first NDEs were thought to be onetime occurrences. A very few persons did report multiple NDEs but these were discrete events, usually separated over time. Soon we found that persons who had an NDE often continued to have other phenomena occur at a later time. Several reported continuing psychic experiences such as precognition and psychokinesis which had never happened before the NDE. Some UFO observers and abductees have reported similar experiences.

In *Heading Toward Omega* (1985) Kenneth Ring notes that a number of NDErs had what he terms "prophetic visions." These persons stated that during their NDEs they were given knowledge of major events which supposedly would take place on earth at a later time. Some UFO abductees have also reported being shown the earth as it will be in the future. Again, these factors affect our definition of the phenomena and must give us pause to think. How do we develop a theory that can encompass a broad range of phenomena and yet effec-

tively deal with any given segment?

There are also generational qualities that can be detected in the studies of various phenomena. Examination of Figure 3 will reveal how these issues have a cyclical nature. The exposure of individual cases leads to more comprehensive studies in an attempt to understand the phenomenon in question. Those studies are followed by aggregate studies generally attempting to define and develop latent patterns. As the body of knowledge becomes more extensive, others attempt a historical perspective. When this historical perspective is accomplished, it is learned that the phenomenon has been present in substantial numbers for a long period of time. The problem is that we previously failed to recognize these occurrences as the phenomenon as it is now defined. Clearly UFOs did not first appear in 1947, nor were the first NDEs reported in the 1970s. As president of IANDS I was continually amazed to receive letters that described NDEs that occurred 30 to 60 years ago. Invariably the writer had been reluctant to tell many people, least of all medical professionals, about the NDE for fear of being branded as crazy.

Figure 2 shows a progression of interest from scientific to psychosocial to philosophical. These correlate with what has been experienced in the development of each field. The first step was to grapple with rudimentary understanding. With UFOs there was a propensity to look for tangible evidence, photos, traces, sensor data, or even hardware. The study of NDEs had few hard data with the possible exception of a handful of cases in which a patient was instrumented in a hospital,

Competing Forces

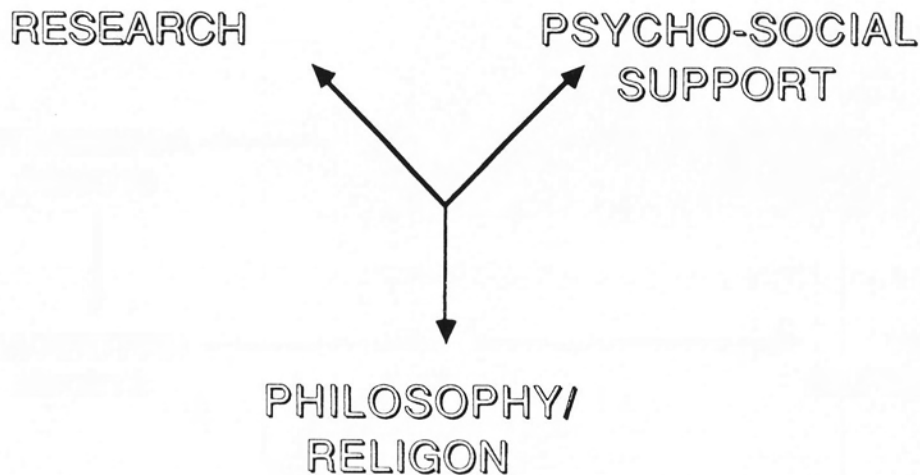


Figure 4

and so emphasis was placed on establishing a consistency of reports over a wide variety of external parameters.

In both communities it was soon learned that there were a significant number of “normal” persons who had been traumatized by their experiences. I say normal because the initial reaction of many traditional investigators is to classify persons who make unusual claims as being abnormal by definition. An element in both fields was to determine that psychologically-healthy persons are the ones most frequently involved. Once the myth that these are unhealthy reporters is dispelled, then one is faced with the problem of how to help them.

This is a potential point of bifurcation for the field. Conflict may arise between “scientists” who want to understand the phenomenon and “helpers” or “experiencers” who are not so interested in scientific explanations as they are in integrating their experiences into the world of consensus reality. Both fields have responded by establishing support groups for those traumatized by their experiences.

Because these are fledgling fields, the resources available are normally limited. Figure 4 shows the competition for these resources. That competition can easily outdistance altruistic virtues in any group.

The third element displayed, philosophy/religion, relates well with the public interest in Figure 2. One need only casually observe the tabloids while in line at the supermarket (I don’t recommend that you buy them) to see the great logical leaps that transpire from research to print. At least once a quarter the NDE is proclaimed to

prove life after death, while UFOs are unequivocally equated to extraterrestrial visitation.

This gap in logic exposes a potential Achilles heel in both fields. A number of spiritual entrepreneurs have proselytized the public into believing that these phenomenal events have a religious quality and that their organization holds the only true explanation. Of course, there is often a healthy charge for this knowledge as well as a gullible population prepared to contribute. The amount of money that can be accumulated in this manner is staggering, and organizations must be prepared to resist great temptation if they truly want to remain objective scientifically or to meet real needs of traumatized experiencers.

There is a lot to be learned from examining how we study phenomenology. I believe that such study will be beneficial to those who choose to enter these fields. Careful consideration of the common prior experiences may help in the future organizational development. It seems that the UFO community is rapidly headed for major bifurcation. That split may have already occurred. That depends on your point of view. If the field is to mature in the conventional sense, it would be smart for the cool heads to prevail and chart a course that will both accommodate fractionalization and stand the scrutiny of traditional science. Failure to do so may result in the demise of the field from within — something the debunkers have been unable to accomplish, though not for lack of trying. ■

Vehicle interference: a cautionary comment

by Jerold R. Johnson

■ ■ Jerold R. Johnson views the UFO scene from his home in Austin, Texas.

Archimedes was a smart man and well-versed in such matters as the weight and displacement of water. I suppose that if Archimedes had been allowed to glimpse 20th-Century technology in action, he would have attempted to understand it in terms of hydraulic theory and might have produced some elaborate calculations on the amount of water that must be displaced to transmit a television signal from the city to the suburbs. His exercise would not have led him toward an understanding of electromagnetics.

In trying to interpret the physical effects exhibited by UFOs in terms of "electromagnetic" or "E-M" fields, we run the same risk as Archimedes. We may miss some potentially exciting and entirely new areas of physics if we try to force-fit reported UFO effects into convenient pigeonholes of familiar field theory. This is the reason that various researchers, in valiant attempts to work back from the reported effect to the UFO, have always calculated impossibly enormous field strengths, while seeking to understand the headlamp-dimming, engine-stopping, engine-starting, and other bizarre effects of UFOs at a distance in terms of known natural laws.

We are also occasionally obliged to ignore or "selectively interpret" the testimony of our UFO witnesses so that we may conveniently categorize these effects as magnetic, acoustic, microwave, ionizing, or whatever. All this in the face of reliable reports that, taken at face value, indicate the UFO phenomenon's ability to (1) remove kinetic energy from a system; (2) reduce or eliminate the gravitational constant; (3) perhaps tamper with the flow of time itself (or at least produce effects so strange that this is the witness' impression of what has happened) — and all of this at a distance, oblivious to the shielding properties of automobile bodies, and via means invisible and silent.

I was moved to consider all of this recently when I read an account, in *UFO Research Australia Newsletter* (May 1989), of a well-investigated vehicle-interference case. The article's one glaring flaw was the insistence of the author, scientist Bryan Dickeson, on an electromag-

netic interpretation of reported effects. Briefly, the report stated that several witnesses traveling together in an automobile on two separate occasions along the same stretch of road saw an odd red light in the sky and experienced a feeling of sudden, deep coldness in the auto's interior. This was coincident with a power loss or misfiring of the engine, and the driver noticed the engine temperature gauge drop from a normal 80 degrees C. to 0 degrees (cold engine). Dickeson writes, "There are no known physical effects which can extract the heat from a substantial metallic mass such as an engine block (and its integral water cooling system) and then return the same amount of energy to the block some minutes later. Therefore, it may be more useful to consider that the temperature monitor 'malfunctioned' in some way."

He then proposes that an external magnetic field affected the temperature sensor, causing the gauge to indicate incorrectly, while the same field produced a sudden chill inside the auto by means of "adiabatic demagnetization" of the oxygen molecules. It is to the author's credit that after examining the literature on these proposed mechanisms and performing some calculations that produced (once again) impossibly high magnetic field values, he comes off unconvinced of his own theory and says at last, "Perhaps the preference of UFO investigators for 'electromagnetic effects' should be reviewed." The simpler interpretation, in my view, is that the witnesses' observations were correct: it got cold inside the auto and the engine temperature went down rapidly coincident with a loss of engine power. This occurred (twice!) in the presence of an anomalous flying lighted object by a means we don't understand but a means we should not arbitrarily label "electromagnetic."

My basic proposition is this: We do not know enough about these physical effects that anomalous objects and entities can seemingly project at will against witnesses and their vehicles to label them "electromagnetic" or anything else, and to mislabel them may well mislead researchers and hamper research into their true nature.

For a while in the 1960s it was accepted dogma that only spark-fired internal-combustion engines could be halted by UFOs, until a case came to light of interference with a diesel engine and blew that theory away. Similarly, one can find within the UFO case literature obser-

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Letters

Soviet ufology

To the editor:

For the past three years I have written articles about the UFO phenomenon for a Russian-language weekly newspaper *Almanac Panorama*, based in Los Angeles. Among Russians, both inside and outside the Soviet borders, there are quite a few ardent ufologists as well as those who are driven by sheer curiosity. I spent my childhood and teenage years in the Soviet Union and recall the interest quite vividly. It was most evident in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev intellectual circles. But the sightings of UFOs in the provinces and in such far-off regions as Siberia and the Soviet Far East did much to carry the interest well beyond the boundaries of the major Soviet cities.

There is also a great deal of interest in science-fiction literature in the Soviet Union and I recall buying precious translations of Western science fiction in the black markets of Russia.

The UFO stories were spread by word of mouth or tiny underground publications. I was most thrilled to find that some of my articles were distributed in the Kiev region in *samizdat* fashion. Nowadays such emigre publications as *Almanac Panorama* can find their ways into Soviet homes without the subscribers' being punished.

Someday there will be a more or less scientific head count of those Soviet citizens who are interested in the UFO phenomenon. I can only vouch that there are many who not only are interested in UFO stories (not in an official capacity) but actually study reports of UFO experiences. I scan the Soviet media and most recent book publications searching for materials that deal, however remotely, with the UFO field.

At the moment I am writing a review of a recent and curious Soviet book which seeks to debunk Soviet UFO experiences and attacks, sometimes fiercely, those who are visible and active in Soviet ufology. The book also confirms that there are many UFO believers, from the steppes of the Ukraine to the Arctic Circle regions. There is no way to determine the veracity of their reports, but someday soon there will be.

It seems to me that the Soviet government is looking for ways to put a lid on UFO-related stories. Consider, for example, the recent Voronezh incident. It took place just as the glasnost campaign is gaining full speed, casting off the shackles of government control over Soviet media. I think the Voronezh incident was a pre-

planned farce, to discredit further UFO stories in the Soviet press from ever being taken seriously and to dissuade the populace from becoming serious about the issue of UFO phenomena. But the Voronezh episode may not be sufficient to quell the people's curiosity. One does not stop tanks by strafing them from ancient airplanes, and the growing interest in UFO phenomena in the Soviet Union is akin to a full-scale tank attack.

Paul Stonehill
Los Angeles, California

To the editor:

"Ufology" has definitely been a catchword in the Soviet press of late. Before, only a few sightings were able to fight their way into small provincial newspapers and that was thanks to the UFO enthusiasts. Now even the most important press can't ignore the subject. So if the reading public might get the impression that aliens are roaming the Soviet Union now, that isn't exactly true. It's just that the earlier reports either were shelved by the researchers or at best were included in our semilegal manuscript bulletin. There has always been enough of pseudo-learned rubbish in the press but some articles really deserve attention. One of them, published in the popular weekly *Nedelya*, tells the following story:

On July 4, 1989, a lady pensioner named Vera with her woman friend Alexandra and her six-year-old daughter went for a walk in the Kiev Hydropark. Vera, whose last name is not given, is quoted as saying, "We came to the Dnieper stream and saw a boat with three persons in it. They wore what looked like silver collarless nighties. They looked alike as two peas and were extremely pale. Their hair was fair and golden, their eyes big and shiny. We asked if they were tourists and where they had come from. They answered in Russian with a somewhat strange accent:

"'We came from another planet. Its whereabouts are beyond your understanding. Every day we take a man from the earth with us. Now it's your turn. We'll show you our craft.'

"One led the way; the other two went at our sides. We wanted to flee, to shout, but we couldn't. It was as if a magnet were driving us forward. When they looked at us, we felt needles and pins all over. Alexandra was white as a ghost and so was I. We begged them to let us go, saying we had families and children. Ahead of us we saw a craft behind the trees of the same silver color as their clothes. It reminded us of a huge cask with a round

antenna on its top. 'Okay, we won't take you,' said the people. 'We'll find somebody else.' With these words they went into the 'cask.' Up went the three-stepped ladder, the door slid closed just like in a lift, and the craft took off without any wind or blowing sand and very soon became a small star in the sky."

Afterwards Vera retold her story on television.

Later A. F. Pugatch, of the Stars and Galaxies Physics Department of the Observatory of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, said in his interview that the lady could remember the details of the incident clearly enough. The women were sure, for example, that the take-off didn't stir sand, that the craft had neither oars nor sails (wings or tail?). Although stories like these are hardly unprecedented, only recently, after long years of censorship, has it become possible to publish such accounts.

Did the incident occur as reported? Pugatch speculates that it was a psychological experience. Yet when it was publicized, another report from the same date came to light. Members of the Iskuskovs family reported that while on a trip to the country on July 4 they observed a UFO landing at Podgortsy, a village near Kiev. People in "silver suits" emerged and the witnesses reported experiencing the same sensations "as Vera described." The incident allegedly occurred late in the evening.

G. I. Lerman said, "It was on June 30 between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. My wife Ann and I saw a fiery, tailed object over Lake Raduga to the northwest of Kiev. It flew at an altitude of 0.5-1.0km, first slowly and then speeding up. In a couple of minutes the flames died and we saw a silver-white balloon." During the sighting they felt their "movement slow down though the mind was clear."

A. N. Olkhovaya of Kiev went out on her balcony on June 24 about midnight. In the sky over the Obolon district, close to the Hydropark, there was a dim, twinkling, rectangular object shaped like a "loaf of bread." The witness called her neighbors. One of them, named Ivanitsky, acknowledged seeing it and hastily took two pictures. The film was developed in the office of the newspaper *Pravda Ukrainy* but there was nothing on it.

The public reaction to these reports was mixed. A resident of Samy wrote that if the aliens had landed in the Ukraine, they would have spoken Ukrainian. Another man from Kiev thought it was all nonsense and demands that Vera be interrogated, presumably by the KGB.

We Yaroslavians can only envy the Kiev residents. Yaroslavl is also an ancient city (founded by Prince Yaroslav the Wise). It used to be the capital of all Russia and now it is one of the centers of Soviet ufology, with a small but active group of investigators. Apparently, alas, the alien pilots are in no hurry to come see us.

V. D. Musinsky
Yaroslavl, U.S.S.R.

Jinns?

To the editor:

The brief review of *The Tujunga Canyon Contacts* in *IUR* (September/October 1989) was much appreciated because it helped bring the book D. Scott Rogo and I wrote to the attention of persons in the UFO-research field. But I wish to correct reviewer George Eberhart's characterization of my views regarding UFO entities.

Eberhart contends that I "believe" these entities are the order of creatures known to Islam as jinns. In fact, I "believe" almost nothing of what I read, see and hear regarding UFOs and their apparent occupants.

On the basis of careful consideration of what evidence exists, mostly gleaned from reports of UFO encounters, I am inclined to think that Gordon Creighton's idea of jinns is an economical and possible explanation. I differ with Creighton, however, when he implies that jinns are synonymous with the Christian concept of demons. My own inquiries, conducted among Muslims living in Los Angeles, suggest that jinns are a separate order of creation from the so-called demons, also known in the Western world as devils or fallen angels.

I advanced the jinn idea as an explanation of some UFO entities (particularly the bedroom-visitor types) in the paperback edition of *Tujunga Canyon Contacts* because it fits the data, in my opinion, better than any other idea. But that does not mean I have a firm belief in the idea; I am certainly able to change my opinion as new data come to the fore.

Ann Druffel
Pasadena, California

Earthlights, earthquakes and extraterrestrials

To the editor:

I must take issue with Paul Devereux who has been harping on a particular string in two recent letters in *IUR* (April/May and September/October 1989).

In the first letter Devereux, referring to Budd Hopkins' *Intruders*, characterizes a ball of light observed by Kathie Davis and others in Davis' backyard as an "absolutely standard, literally garden-variety earthlight." He states that Davis experienced Persinger-like effects when she went to look for the light: blackout, lost time, confabulation. Devereux claims that this light phenomenon must have been associated with a "small earth tremor." (This disturbance occurred at a neighbor's house at about the same time Davis was seeing the anomalous light in her yard.) Devereux repeats this assertion in his second letter.

It so happens that I noticed Hopkins' description of an earthquakelike phenomenon when I first read the book. I've long had an interest in determining whether Michael Persinger's tectonic strain theory of UFOs holds water, so I copied the pertinent passages from *Intruders* and noted the date and times; I sent them to John Derr. Derr is with the U.S. Geological Survey and works with Persinger in seeking statistical correlations between UFO reports and earthquakes. I asked Derr to search his files and tell me if a quake occurred at the time of the incidents Hopkins recounts.

Derr wrote me on April 4, 1988, as follows: "This letter is in response ... to your short inquiry concerning the June 30, 1983, incident in Indianapolis.... As for earthquakes, for the entire year there were no epicenters in Indiana and no earthquakes close enough to be felt in Indianapolis, as reported in *United States Earthquakes, 1983*, published by the USGS. It is most unlikely that we would have missed one that was felt by even a few people."

Derr states that the ball of light was "most probably a case of ball lightning." He says that "hot, humid, overcast, mid-summer" weather is conducive to thunderstorms, implying that a thunderstorm was in the area. Unfortunately, he does not state whether he checked the weather records for the time period, but I believe he did not.

Here is a perfect example on Devereux's part of portraying a UFO as an "earthlight" without doing any simple, fundamental, basic research. Derr himself, who is supposed to know the strengths of the TST, eliminates quakes as a possibility in this case. Why didn't Devereux write Derr? He knows of Derr's investment in the TST. In the same manner, Derr may believe the Davises' "earthlight" was ball lightning, but has he checked?

I have discovered over the past 15 years the utter ease with which both ufologists and skeptics alike pronounce their great answers to the UFO puzzle. But in 99 cases out of 100 they've always conveniently (consciously or unconsciously) left something out of their argument: facts.

Greg Long
Tigard, Oregon

To the editor:

In his letter in September/October 1989 *IUR* Paul Devereux complains that ufologists pay no attention to the history of their subject, then goes on to display his own ignorance of UFO history.

Lamenting American ufologists' current interest in the extraterrestrial hypothesis, which he rejects in favor of what (as far as I can tell) is at its core British nature mysticism with a thin "scientific" veneer, he alleges that ufologists are "amnesiac" about their onetime enthusiasm for "ski-suited Venusians," for whom they have now

substituted the gray-skinned humanoids of abduction lore. He asks where those Venusians are now.

The answers are: (1) American ufologists were *never* enamored of Venusians. During the heyday of George Adamski, et al, serious UFO researchers (including those associated with NICAP, APRO, CSI and any number of others) despised Venusian-contact stories as fraudulent and repeatedly attacked them in print. The classic statement of the early ufologist position on these sorts of contactee yarns was the late Isabel Davis' devastating review of the major contact claims of the 1950s, "Meet the Extraterrestrial," published in the November 1957 issue of *Fantastic Universe*. NICAP once caught Adamski red-handed in fraud and on another occasion fired one of its employees after her contactee sympathies became known. (2) The ski-suited Venusians never went away. They're still around, where they always were: in contactee literature and theology. And ufologists are still rejecting them.

Devereux is in dire need of lessons in the history of ufology.

Tom Brown
St. Paul, Minnesota

A Canadian perspective

To the editor:

As a born and bred Canadian I read with interest the exchange between American and European ufologists in the March/April 1989 issue of *IUR*. Historically, Canadians have been caught between their European roots and the influences of neighboring America. It seems that ufology is no exception.

The differences between the two styles of ufology are certainly remarkable, although perhaps predictable because of the differences in culture and histories of the two groups. As Forteanes are quick to point out, UFOs were observed on both sides of the Atlantic previous to the Arnold era, but it was the American public that caught on to the "flying saucer" craze first. I agree also that the Freedom of Information Act has probably allowed American ufologists the ability to pursue the conspiracy theory with greater ease than their European counterparts. But it is worth noting that it was a Canadian document (the Wilbert B. Smith memo) that sent the cover-up theory spinning.

Canadians are in a curious position and share more European traits than American ones, even allowing for the flow of Americanism across the border. From my experience as one who has investigated cases in North Dakota and Minnesota as well as my native Manitoba, the first contrast that springs to mind is the policing system. In the U.S., sheriffs patrol their counties in a variety of ways and many cooperate with UFO investigators. But in Canada the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are both the

police force and the equivalent of the FBI (and maybe the CIA as well), and cooperation is less common.

Another problem is distance. A million persons live in Manitoba, in an area larger than England, but mostly in one city, Winnipeg. Other provinces are much the same in their makeup. So if a UFO sighting is made 300 km away from a lone investigator, the chances of its being investigated are remote. With the exception of Ontario and Quebec, Canadian provinces have only one or two ufologists each to cover an area the size of all of England or a couple of Texas.

Despite this, Canadian ufology has maintained a high level of competence in comparison to the rest of the world, including America and Europe. And it has done so in both styles of ufology as well. Stanton Friedman and Michael Persinger, both transplanted Americans living in Canada, are at the forefront of modern ufology. Friedman is embroiled in the MJ-12 debate and the good Dr. Persinger (with whose tectonic strain theory [TST] I take issue) is a major figure in alternative ufology in conjunction with Paul Devereux's earthlights theory.

Elsewhere most people know about CUFORN and Larry Fenwick in southern Ontario. His proximity to the States gives CUFORN a distinctly American flavor, and the sensational style of the *CUFORN Bulletin* doesn't exactly endear it to the skeptics. John Musgrave is well-known in ufological circles and seems to be more psychosocial- than cover-up-oriented. He resides in Alberta, as does W. Ritchie Benedict, whose writings have appeared in a number of ufozines. Tim Tokaryk carries the one-man show for Saskatchewan. Quebec has a number of ufologists, and Ontario has other groups scattered around its Golden Horseshoe, led by persons such as Bonnie Wheeler and Mr. X. Aside from Friedman in the East, I'm not aware of ufologists in Atlantic Canada. But histories or overviews of Canadian ufology, notably by Friedman and David Haisell, have appeared elsewhere, so I need not elaborate on the subject here.

It is probably sufficient to say that Canadian ufology is not so easily pigeonholed as American and European versions, and although we have certain traits of both groups, the "loneliness of the long-distance ufologist" has made us more loners, and hence more independent. Where else could you find Ken McCullough with his alternative interpretation of the Hill star map, or Grant Cameron's dogged determination to uncover UFO-related documents from two governments at the same time?

It is therefore difficult to say whether Canada as a whole is one kind of ufology or another. Canada is so large that its Pacific and Atlantic coasts have little in common, and the prairies in between have even less. But rest assured that Canadian ufologists are every bit as active as their counterparts elsewhere. My files have about 700 cases for Manitoba alone, and you shouldn't ask how many cases Musgrave has altogether. Perhaps being slightly removed from the action has made us more reflective, all things considered.

With respect to the abduction phenomenon, there have been a number of notable Canadian cases (for example, the account described in Haisell's *The Missing Seven Hours*). Locally, Roy Bauer and I have worked with some clinical hypnotists and psychologists on some cases that have come to our attention. In my opinion these cases are more suggestive of the European interpretation of abductions than the American one — by which I mean the cases appear to have a psychosocial cause rather than an extraterrestrial catalyst. But I emphasize that this is only from our experience with a limited number of incidents, and our sample size is certainly too small to allow us to draw any sort of conclusion.

And speaking of drawing conclusions, I must make a few remarks about Paul Devereux's letter in the same issue of *IUR*. He claims that his earthlights theory was heavily criticized by American ufologists; yet the abduction "craze" has not received the same treatment. First of all, as one of those critics (see, for example, my "Earthlights, Earthquakes, UFOs and TST," *IUR*, January/February 1986) I don't mind being called an American if he doesn't mind being called an Irishman. Second, there have been a number of articles critical of abductions published in American UFO magazines. And earthlights are not singled out for criticism without justification. Abductions are easier to study than earthlights because (alleged) abductees can be brought into an office for detailed and extended study. Any time that I've gone to study a spooklight, it's in the field (literally) and even then there's usually an immediately obvious alternative explanation other than tectonic strain. The empirical evidence simply is not there.

I look forward to reading Devereux's new book, *Earth Lights Revelation*, though I find it a bit presumptuous of him to claim his theory is unsurpassed by any other. But it may well be true that his earthlights theory is more testable than some others. It will, I hope, be more testable than Persinger's TST, which Greg Long has recently found to have no possible method of testing using standard UFO and seismic data. Ufologists have not "chosen" to ignore the "importance" of earthlights any more than they have ignored the possibility that ufonauts are interdimensional fairyfolk. But if the physical theory is not presented for critical examination, one UFO theory is as inadequate as any other. And writing as a skeptic, I can note that neither abductions nor earthlights are currently supported by any strong physical evidence. But they both have value as theories, whether in the context they are presented or as exercises in speculation.

I would be more inclined to participate in critical debates about ufological theories than to take an absolute stand at this particular time. So, rather than merely state that "electromagnetic fields" could also explain Kathie Davis' abduction experiences without invoking alien intervention, tell us specifically how such radiative energy could create the effects and whether this energy

could have originated. Would it not be simpler, as some skeptics have suggested, just to label the case a "hallucination" and not try to describe it in terms of new concepts that science does not accept? I enjoy playing devil's advocate but it should be the responsibility of a theory's proponent to play the role as well, schizophrenic as that may seem.

I don't think anyone is rejecting the earthlights or TST idea at this point. It seems more likely that ufologists and debunkers alike are waiting for a clearer, more explicit description of the TST before trying to apply it to the data. This is more in line with scientific inquiry than is the practice of molding the theory around the data and making incredible claims about how the theory can explain numerous anomalous phenomena.

Chris Rutkowski
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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EDITORIAL — continued from page 3

Churchyard, London SW14 8HB, England. At the same time our European psychosociologists would do well to reacquaint themselves with the UFO experience's physical aspects, which sometime ago mysteriously disappeared from their treatment of the phenomenon, and to start dealing in a *serious* manner, as none have done (or even come close to doing) to date, with the Roswell evidence. And then let the debate begin. The pages of *IUR* are open to any rational statement of any reasonable point of view. If you have something to contribute, we hope you will do it here. — Jerome Clark

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Airship scare — continued from page 14

a story on the Cuban airship. This long article dealt almost entirely with the role the airship was to play in Cuba's fight for freedom.

When the airships crossed the Rocky Mountain chain and invaded the Midwest, Midwestern editors were aware of what had been written in the California newspapers. On April 17 page one of the *Daily Globe* of Atchison, Kansas, discussed alleged airship inventor Pedro Sanchez of Cuba. It intimated that the airship was somehow connected to Gen. Weyler. Perhaps to blow him up?

On page one of the April 18 issue of the *Sunday Democrat* of Sedalia, Missouri, was a partial headline

reading, "A Trip from Maine to the Pacific Ocean in the Interest of Setting Cuba Free." The article consisted of a letter written by a supposed Cuban airship inventor. He wrote at length of liberating Cuba from Spain but he also had other ambitions: helping the Greeks and freeing Constantinople from the Turks. An all-purpose liberator!

While it was the plight of Cuba that Americans thought of most, I have also come upon illustrations and articles dealing with the Greco-Turkish war. There were fears that the great powers, including America, would be dragged into the fighting. This was particularly evident in Midwestern newspapers, even small-town weeklies.

As if there were not already enough war hysteria, Japan contended with the United States for control of Hawaii. The *Burlington* [Iowa] *Hawk-Eye* told of the airship Ian Chang. J. Rudolph wrote to his mother, "I have been taken prisoner by Japanese officers from near Wahihow plantation near Honolulu. The republic of Hawaii is doomed."

During this period there were also tensions between Germany and its neighbors. The Boer conflict in South Africa was stirring.

All of these elements have to be taken into consideration if we are to understand the psychological atmosphere of late 1896 and early 1897 and to understand how the airship scare took the particular shape it did. The events, including the "sightings" and the "landings," did not occur in a vacuum but in an atmosphere of fear and expectation. ■

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vations that either contradict or are not encompassed by each of the several "simple" theories of UFO effects that have been championed over the years, observations no less reliable than those cited to formulate those theories in the first place.

I urge that in the future editorial caution be taken in introductory literature, training manuals, report forms, and other organizational publications to eliminate the assuming phrase "electromagnetic effect" and "E-M" abbreviation unless they are absolutely warranted in context and to replace them with a more neutral indicator of our present state of knowledge. I hope as well that investigators who file case reports exercise the same caution against using labels that imply a particular mechanism, and especially refrain from discounting or omitting witness observations that fail to fit a preconceived theory. ■